THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION

MAGAZINE.

TIME is passing!—up and doing!—
"Work while it is call'd to-day!"
Still some useful task pursuing;
Loiter not along the way.

One short word in kindness spoken,
Costing scarce a moment's breath,
May bind up a heart that's broken,
Save a sinking soul from death.

Cups of cooling water given
To the weary by thy side,
Shall be meted back in heaven,
Sparkling from life's crystal tide.

There are some whose souls are shaded,
Deeply-dyed by stains of sin:
Seek the fallen and degraded,
Gently back to virtue win.

Help;—no matter who may ask it;—
All are workmanship of God,—
There's a gem in every casket,
Purchased by the Saviour's blood.

Work for Jesus,—strive to win it,—
He hath bought for thee a crown;
Thine to place bright stars within it,
At *His* feet to lay it down.

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AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

TO OUR READERS.

It is impossible to review another year's labour among our social waifs and strays without expressing our deep gratitude to Him who has hitherto caused both "sower and reaper to rejoice together."

The past year has been one of great interest to all who strive to discern the "signs of *our* times." Beginning with a great measure for the improvement of the social condition of unhappy Ireland, it closed with a fiery struggle between the two great military nations of Europe, the horrors of which taught plainly that mere civilisation, when not directed by the gospel, can never tame the unholy passions of fallen humanity.

Among the shadows of the past year, we cannot forbear to notice the deaths of many earnest supporters of, and workers in, Ragged Schools. In less than nine months no less than fifteen of our friends were called—some suddenly—to their Father's house. Four of these were Vice-Presidents of the Ragged School Union; one of whom, Judge Payne, was the ornament of our platform for twenty-six years. Our loss, however great, is softened by the belief that Heaven has become all the richer from the accession of our departed friends. May their mantle fall on very many as earnest labourers in this part of the great vineyard of Christ!

A Bill to afford increased facilities for National Education, after much discussion, and many important alterations, was passed last session. The new scheme, which puts an end to the old, comes into operation on the 1st of April, but it is impossible to foresee what bearing it will have on Ragged Schools. That, should it be as successful as its promoters expect, it will render Ragged Schools no longer necessary, we do not for a moment believe—nay, we think that, as education assumes more and more of a secular character, they will become more needful than ever. This fact will become obvious when it is indicated that—apart from our Day and Night Schools—there are above 900 social and religious operations conducted by the 196 Institutions affiliated to the Ragged School Union. We leave, then, our readers to judge what would be the condition of the wretched alleys of London if our 247 Sunday Schools, with their 33,000 scholars, and our 182 Adult Meetings, with their 10,000 members, were closed for ever. But this we do not fear, so long as Christian men and women believe that the gospel is the only panacea for social and moral misery.

In conducting this Magazine, our aim has been to encourage present labourers, and to enlist new ones, into this great Home Mission. With this view, we last year added a new section, under the title of "Facts and Scraps." This novel feature, embracing as it did about 100 brief articles, has, we are glad to say, been much prized by our fellow labourers; and any facts which bear on the social condition of the poor, we shall be always glad to receive from local friends.

We cannot conclude without thanking those who have aided us either by contributions or suggestions. We ask them to continue their services, and to add to their kindness by extending our circulation in quarters where our serial is at present unknown. In this way, we shall unitedly aid in extending the kingdom of our common Lord; until the "day dawns," and those "shadows flee away" which have darkened our world for nigh six thousand years.

THE EDITOR.

1, Exeter Hall, *December* 1*st*, 1870.

The "Elementary Education Act, 1870," is the short title of the new law on education in England and Wales.

Before touching upon the details of this Act, allow me to say that, though a law on education may be new in England, yet such laws have been in operation elsewhere for many years, especially in Prussia. The Government of that country, immediately after the peace of 1815, turned its attention to the improvement of the educational condition of the people. The necessity for it was proved by Government statistics, which showed that only two in 100 of the youth of the country could read and write. To remedy this, the Government framed a Bill which, in 1819, was passed into a law. This law has now been upwards of fifty years in full operation, and the present result is, that although Prussia has doubled her population in the time, yet not a boy or girl, at the age of fifteen years, is now to be found unable to read and write. No wonder, then, with such a result worked out by an education law, that the promoters of Government education in our own country should have freely drawn their ideas from such a source; and we have no hesitation in saying that our new law has been moulded upon the Prussian model, with such modifications as were necessary for our purposes. "The true greatness of a people does not consist in borrowing *nothing* from others, but in borrowing from all whatever is good, and in perfecting whatever it appropriates."

Having said thus much in a preliminary way, let us now proceed to look at our own law, that we may comprehend its provisions, and ascertain how far we can honestly and usefully work out those provisions for our own special mission for promoting Christian education among the destitute and neglected juvenile poor.

The Act contains 100 clauses, and as a matter of course has to lay down general principles, and settle a large amount of detail. In opening the subject to-night, the time will only admit of my dealing with the chief features, for which purpose I will call your attention to what the Act provides, under four divisions, viz.:—(1) School authorities; (2) School buildings; (3) School children; and (4) School finances.

I. School Authorities.

Hitherto the authorities have been twofold:—

1. The Local Managers, or School Committee; and (2) The Education Department, or Committee of Council on Education.

Until the local managers took the initiative in the establishment of Schools and made demands on the parliamentary grant for aid in forming or carrying them on, the Education Department did nothing. The Department having waited till action had been voluntarily taken, then considered the claims made for aid, and voted the assistance according to a code of regulations. The new Act reverses all this. The Education Department will no longer wait for local and voluntary effort to take the lead, but from this time and henceforward will, in a direct manner, ascertain what in the way of public Elementary Schools is required, where required, and to what extent required, and then put the machinery of the Act into operation to supply the deficiencies. In the event of this machinery getting out of

order, or not working to the satisfaction of the Department, the Act gives the Department large corrective powers. Thus the Education Department can effectively and, when need be, directly deal with the question of public Elementary Schools, both with regard to quantity and quality. The School authorities in the future will be threefold, viz.:—

1. The Education Department;
2. The School Board; and
3. The Managers of Local Schools.

It will not be needful for me to go into further particulars respecting the Education Department or the managers of local Schools; suffice it to say that the results and successes of past years wrought out by the managers form the school material to be immediately dealt with by the new Act, and though the Education Department and the school managers may change places, neither for the present supersedes the other.

It will, however, be expected that we shall dwell somewhat on the new School authority created by the new Act.

THE SCHOOL BOARD.—The School Boards will exist only in those districts where there is a proved deficiency of elementary education (clause 10); and their duty will be to supply that deficiency by the erection of sufficient schoolroom accommodation (clause 18); to maintain all Schools placed under their control; and to see that the children of the district attend School. They will possess power to procure sites (clause 19), erect buildings, improve or enlarge buildings, and fit up Schools with all needful apparatus.

The members of a School Board will acquire their status by election, and will vary in number from 5 to 15 (clause 31—1), according to the size of their district.

In a *parish* out of the metropolis they will be elected by the ratepayers (clause 29).

In a *borough*, by those on the Burgess Roll (clause 29).

In the metropolis there will be 10 sections or districts, viz.:—1 in the City, and 9 for the surrounding boroughs.

The members for the City will be elected by the same persons who have the right to vote for common councilmen (clause 37—6). The other London sections will be elected by those persons who vote for vestrymen.

The boundaries of the districts, and the number of members for the metropolis, are fixed by the Education Department (clause 37—1 and 2) and that Department has fixed the number for the London Board at forty-nine, viz.:—

Marylebone	7	Westminster	5
Finsbury	6	Southwark	4
Lambeth	5	City	4
Tower Hamlets	5	Chelsea	4
Hackney	5	Greenwich	4

It is decided that for the metropolis, the elections for all the divisions, except the City, shall be by ballot; and in all cases the elector shall have

as many votes as members are required (clause 29). He may give all his votes to one candidate, or distribute them as he thinks proper. The first election is fixed for Tuesday, November 29, 1870. Any person may be nominated as a candidate without restriction as to residence, sex, nationality, or colour. When elected, the members will serve for three years, when a fresh election will be due (clause 37—4). The London School Board will elect a chairman, who will receive a salary (clause 38). He may or may not have previously been a member of the Board. All officers are honorary members. In the event of a School Board not performing its duties, the Education Department has powers to supersede it, and appoint other persons to fill the post so rendered vacant (clause 63).

Any person convicted of personating a voter at an election, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £20 (clause 89).

The penalty for forging or falsifying a voting-paper is £50, or six months' imprisonment (clause 90).

Members of the School Board convicted of making profits out of the works for the Board will be subject to a penalty of £50 (clause 34).

Corrupt practices at the election are punishable (clause 91).

When a School Board is established, it becomes a body corporate, having perpetual succession and a common seal, with power to acquire and hold land for school use (clause 30).

II. School Buildings.

The schoolroom accommodation in a given district must be sufficient for all the resident children of that district of school age, whose education is not otherwise provided for (clause 5). Notice of that deficiency is to be given, in the first place, by the Education Department (clause 6). To arrive at this deficiency, every School, public or not, that gives efficient elementary education suitable for the children of the district, shall be taken into consideration (clause 8), and the difference between the total amount of this accommodation, and the total of children of school age, will be the deficiency. This deficiency may be provided for by friends who will erect buildings within six months (clause 10), and in them conduct voluntary Schools. In the event of aid from the parliamentary grant being required, the application must be made before the end of current year (clause 96). If the additional Schools be not thus supplied by the end of the six months, the Education Department will cause a School Board to be formed to do the work (clause 10). Should that School Board not supply the deficiency in twelve months (clause 11), the Education Department has power to appoint other persons to serve on that Board who will provide for the district (clause 63). All Schools provided by School Boards shall be—

(*a.*) Public Elementary Schools within the meaning of the Act; and

(*b.*) No religious catechism or religious formulary, which is distinctive of any particular denomination, shall be taught in the School so provided (clause 14).

No Schools after March 31, 1870, will be eligible to receive aid from the parliamentary grant but those that are deemed Public Elementary Schools within the meaning of the Act (clause 96). These, however, will be of two

classes, Voluntary Schools and Board Schools, but the whole will be under the action of the Conscience Clause (clause 7). The friends of Voluntary Schools may, if they desire it, transfer their Schools to the School Board, in which case they are no longer Voluntary, but Board Schools (clause 23). Such Schools may, with consent of all parties, be re-transferred to the managers, and again become Voluntary Schools (clause 24).

The School Board has power to provide certified Industrial Schools, but such Schools will be subject to the provisions of the Industrial School Act, 1866, and not to the Elementary Education Act, 1870 (clauses 27, 28).

A School may be discontinued by the School Board, when the Education Department is satisfied that it is unnecessary, or may be removed to a more suitable site (clause 18.)

The schoolroom must allow eight square feet for each scholar, and in height be not less than ten feet.

III. The School Children.

The school age of children is fixed at from five to thirteen years (clause 74), and in districts where there is a School Board, the attendance at School of children of this age can be made imperative by bye-law. The exceptions are—

(*a.*) The child's education being already and elsewhere provided for.

(*b.*) Sickness.

(*c.*) Child's residence three or more miles from School-house (clause 74).

The arab class of children can be arrested by an officer of the School Board, and brought before two justices, with a view to their being placed in an Industrial School (clause 36).

Children too poor to pay school fees may be sent to ordinary Schools, and the fees paid by the School Board for any period not exceeding six months at a time, but may be renewed; or if the number of children of this class be large enough, Free Schools may be provided expressly for them (clauses 25 and 26).

The number of children in a district of a school age may be approximately ascertained, by estimating them, after making fair deductions, at one sixth of the population, so that if London has a population of 3,000,000, there must be schoolroom accommodation for half a million of children in the metropolis.

The compulsory attendance of children at School will only apply to Board Schools; it does not appear from the Act that this power will exist in connection with Voluntary Schools. It will not be applicable to the Board Schools until the bye-law on the subject has been for a month before the ratepayers, then submitted to the Education Department, and afterwards sanctioned by the Queen in Council. The bye-law has then all the effect of a provision of the Education Act. The penalty for a breach of this bye-law will not exceed 5*s.* inclusive of costs for each offence (clause 74—5).

There is a provision to exempt a child from ten to thirteen years of age from total or partial attendance at School provided it is certified by one of Her Majesty's inspectors that such child has reached a standard of education that may be named by a bye-law (clause 74—5).

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